

## WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 18, 2021

Online--Zoom

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### Invasive Species Council Members Present:

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Joe Maroney, Chair	Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Blain Reeves, Vice Chair	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Shaun Seaman	Chelan County Public Utility District
Kendall Farley	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Steve Burke	King County
Jason Anderson	Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
Adam Fyall	Benton County
Todd Hass	Puget Sound Partnership
Mark Taylor	Trout Unlimited
Charles Cunningham	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Clinton Campbell	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Karen Ripley	U.S. Forest Service
Carrie Cook-Tabor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brad White	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Lizbeth Seebacher	Washington State Department of Ecology
Allen Pleus	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ray Willard	Washington Department of Transportation
Mary Fee	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Andrea Thorpe	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Todd Murray	Washington State University

### Guests:

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Robert Compton	U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
Irene Weber	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Joe Rocchio	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Eric Anderson	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chelsey Buffington	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Paul van Westendorp	British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries

### Recreation and Conservation Office Staff:

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Justin Bush	Executive Coordinator
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Wyatt Lundquist	Board Liaison
Julia McNamara	Administrative Assistant
Alexis Haifley	Community Outreach & Environmental Education Specialist

## Welcome and Call to Order

**Chair Joe Maroney** opened the Washington Invasive Species Council (WISC) meeting at 9 AM and called on **Wyatt Lundquist**, Board Liaison, to call roll to determine quorum and to provide webinar rules and instructions. Following, Chair Maroney noted that the meeting was being livestreamed by Television Washington (TVW)

**Motion:** Approval of March 2021 Agenda

**Moved by:** Member Reeves

**Seconded by:** Member Fee

**Decision:** **Approved**

**Motion:** Approval of December 2020 Meeting minutes

**Moved by:** Member Ripley

**Seconded by:** Member Willard

**Decision:** **Approved**

## Item 1: Recognition of Recreation and Conservation Office Director Kaleen Cottingham

**Chair Maroney** introduced **Kaleen Cottingham** and recognized her service to Washington State as the Director of the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Following his thanks, Director Cottingham came forward and provided her background with WISC and her retirement plans. Chair Maroney opened the floor to other WISC members to speak and provide her with best wishes.

Closing, Chair Maroney also recognized the retirement of **Member Pat Stevenson** with the Stillaguamish Tribe.

## Item 2: Bureau of Indian Affairs Northwest Region Invasive Species Program

**Robert Compton**, Rangeland Management Specialist from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, provided information on how they address invasive species.

Opening he provided a background of himself, his work through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and what the Bureau is.

Compton explained that the Bureau manages and maintains approximately 56 million acres of land in the US that has been dedicated to Native American reservations. The Bureau has twelve regional offices across the US. One of the twelve regions is the Northwest Region that includes 45 tribes in Washington, Oregon, and parts of Montana and Alaska.

Compton noted that they oversee the Agriculture and Rangeland Programs of the Northwest Region. Through 25 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), part 166, Grazing Permits, there is support of the department's goals to serve communities by improving the management of land and natural resources. As part of land management, this department works to eradicate noxious weeds.

Compton explained that there are two federal codes that help guide noxious weed eradications, the American Indian Agriculture Resource Management Act, 25 US Code, Chapter 39, and the Federal Noxious Weed Act, 7 US Code, Chapter 2814. While these codes are great, Compton noted that there is little to no funding to develop noxious weed management plans. Luckily, the Bureau helps in different ways, such as guiding tribes through the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, and encourages tribes to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the county and state weed boards. Lastly, they encourage the tribes to create their own noxious weed codes.

Closing, Compton addressed the funding that is allocated to tribes for invasive species. From fiscal year 2020, he noted that there was an award of \$794,329 split between 10 tribes for aquatic invasive species. For terrestrial invasive species, \$643,300 was split between 12 tribes. There was also one tribe awarded \$62,000 to create an integrated weed removal plan.

Concerning fiscal year 2021, 13 tribes have requested \$1,081,000 to treat and manage aquatic invasive species and 10 tribes have applied for \$496,000 for terrestrial invasive species management. The tribes are awaiting the approval of their funding requests.

### **Item 3: Natural Heritage Program Invasive Plant Assessment**

**Irene Weber**, Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Vegetation Ecologist, and **Joe Rocchio**, Program Manager for DNR's Natural Heritage Program, provided an overview of a project that would help rate and determine which nonnative plants most degrade the ecosystem they reside in.

Providing context for the project, Rocchio noted that the Natural Heritage program's efforts are dedicated in part to assessing ecosystem conditions and identifying threats to rare plants. To do so, they examine the abundance of non-native and invasive plants.

By creating a standardized list that includes metrics for measurements, it will be easier to identify the magnitude of threat that each species poses to the ecosystem for assessment.

Weber further explained that the Natural Heritage Program also identifies the location of rare species and rare/high-quality ecosystems, determines rare plant and ecosystem conservation priorities, and distributes data to guide conservation actions and inform land use decisions.

The Natural Heritage Program uses an ecological integrity assessment to summarize the conditions or integrity of ecosystems. One of the metrics of that assessment is the abundance of invasive, nonnative plants that impact the biodiversity and ecosystem function. A standardized list of which nonnative plants are invasive is needed to systematically employ that metric. The goal of the project is to develop a protocol that will be used by experts to assess the ability of a given nonnative species to inflict ecological harm onto a native ecosystem.

To create this protocol, there would be two panels brought together made up of botanical experts, ecologists, and experts on invasive species management. The first panel would be a scientific advisory panel and the second panel would be a ranking panel.

The scientific advisory panel will assist in the development of a ranking protocol, which may be based on several different ranking systems from other regions in the United States and internationally. Weber noted that climate change, Washington's differing eco-regions, and the ecological impacts, distribution, feasibility of control, and biological characteristic of the nonnative species will be considered within the ranking list.

Once the protocol is in place, the plants will need to be ranked, a metric for scoring will need to be created, and a document will be produced for the public to use.

Following the presentation, Weber opened the floor to questions. **Chair Maroney** asked if it would be helpful to include WISC members on the panels, to which Weber replied she would be reaching out to interested WISC members soon. **Member Pleus** inquired about funding for the projects and panels, to which Rocchio replied that a limited number of \$500 honorariums are available for those who need financial support to participate.

**Member Cook-Tabor** inquired if the ranked list would be linked to quarantine and the prevention of noxious weeds from coming into the state. Weber explained that those had already been considered in the project development.

Closing, **Member Burke** noted that he sits on the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board Noxious Weed Committee and that he would find this tool useful.

#### **Item 4: Executive Coordinator's Report**

**Justin Bush**, WISC Executive Coordinator, provided a briefing on the activities of WISC in the past quarter including news releases, events, published reports, sighting reports, and legislation.

There were many news releases within the past quarter, with three of them being joint releases. One joint release was between the Montana Invasive Species Council and WISC to address the finding and recommendations of a transboundary feral swine work group, the second joint release was between WISC and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to make the state aware of Marimo moss balls that contained Zebra Mussels, and the final release partnered with the Bureau of Reclamation, highlighting the opening of a new watercraft inspection station in Cle Elum that will be run by WDFW. Other news releases included public notification of Invasive Species Awareness Week in Washington as well as a new statewide invasive species strategy.

Bush mentioned the virtual invasive species week events that occurred between February 22-26. Webinar topics included feral swine, spotted lantern fly, aquatic invasive species, Columbia Gorge invasive species and exotic pest workshop, and the Asian giant hornet.

During invasive species week, in collaboration with C89.5 FM-Radio and the King County Noxious Weed Board, WISC piloted radio ads to highlight the virtual event and threat of invasive species. Bush reported that the outreach results and future radio strategy would be provided to the council in the June WISC meeting in an overview of outreach planning.

Moving forward, Bush mentioned two reports that were released. These were the biennial report to legislature that summarizes WISC's work and WISC's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

Next Bush covered social media, highlighting that twitter remains the platform that produces the furthest outreach with 100,100 impressions in the last quarter. Bush noted that most of these impressions were linked to WISC's news releases.

Regarding Senate Bill 5063 - Concerning the expiration date of the invasive species council, Bush reported that there had been unanimous support in the Senate toward the bill, which was not headed to the House for consideration.

Closing, Bush requested council volunteers for a workgroup that would have the objective of understanding the issues and nexus between invasive species and diversity, inclusion, equity, and social justice.

**Members Thorpe, Seaman, Farley, and Celeste Williams** volunteered.

**Chair Maroney** asked if other Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) boards were working on diversity, equity, and inclusion, to which Bush reported that Alexis Haifley, WISC's Education and Outreach Specialist, stands in on RCO's staff diversity, equity, and inclusion panel.

**Item 5: Break- 11:06 a.m.- 11:10 a.m.**

**Item 6: State Agency Legislation and Budget update**

### **Department of Agriculture**

Addressing state agency legislation and the Department of Agriculture's budget, **Member White** explained that there was rulemaking occurring on Asian giant hornet quarantine language and that both the federal and state budgets appear stable.

### **Department of Ecology**

**Member Seebacher** explained that the Department of Ecology requested to move the Aquatic Invasive Plant Species Fund from the operating budget to the capital budget. For the account, there was a request for \$1.7 million for 2021-2023.

While there was no state agency legislation, Member Seebacher did note that the State Noxious Weed Control Board had received funding in February for flowering rush.

### **Department of Fish and Wildlife**

**Member Pleus** explained that from the governor's budget, there was \$2.8 million that would be put toward aquatic invasive species. This funding would focus on zebra and quagga mussels, northern pike, European green crab, and watercraft inspection stations. However, this funding would not cover the Marimo moss ball response.

## **Department of Natural Resources**

**Vice Chair Reeves** opened noting that the DNR does not have any legislative requests directly associated with invasive species, but DNR has been advocating for House Bill (HB) 1168, which indirectly overlaps with the management of invasive species through wildfire prevention.

Closing, he explained that funding appeared stable.

## **Department of Transportation**

Beginning with the Department of Transportation's budget, **Member Willard** noted that DOT is looking forward to a consistent level of maintenance funding for roadside maintenance and weed control as a result of legislative changes to the transportation budgeting process to cover unexpected overruns in winter maintenance in years of heavy snow, this will allow spring weed control effort to proceed despite winter maintenance overruns. There has been discussion within the agency and legislature this biennium that recognized the importance of maintenance and preservation funding versus funding new construction projects. Member Willard noted that under the proposed budget for the coming biennium WSDOT plans to spend approximately \$3 million/year on weed control alone for the 100k acres of roadside the agency maintains.

For legislative agency requests, Member Willard noted that the bill proposing changes to RCW 17.10 concerning noxious weeds would allow the counties with assessment-based fees to assess WSDOT right of way for the first time. If passed WSDOT expects to pay an additional \$50k/year to the county program.

## **Noxious Weed Control Board**

Concerning legislative action, **Member Fee** noted HB 1355, which would be an update to RCW 17.10. RCW 17.10 regulates all noxious weed programs.

Addressing the budget, Fee noted that the budget appears stable.

Closing, she mentioned that some projects had not been completed in 2020, such as Class A projects for the county and the distribution of beautify seed packets. This was due to budget restrictions.

## **Parks and Recreation Commission**

**Member Thorpe** spoke on the state of the budget, explaining that the baseline funding should hold, which supports the three regional stewards and efforts to tackle Class A and B weeds. Member Thorpe also noted that because there has been an increase in

state park visitation, there has been a proposed increase in maintenance staff and that the forest health funding in the capital budget appears promising.

Closing, Member Thorpe mentioned that State Parks had submitted grant applications for funding that will include control of invasive species as part of ecosystem restoration.

### **Puget Sound Partnership**

**Member Hass** opened noting that the Puget Sound Partner (PSP) has no legislative request bills, but they are supporting WISC's extension bill and the Washington Sea Grant and their crab team.

Closing, Member Hass explained that PSP would like to see continued research surrounding the Orca Task Force's recommendation 14, which deals with the suppression of nonnative aquatic species that effect orca's ability to feed on salmon.

### **Washington State University**

**Member Murray** relayed that there was little to update concerning the budget, but there is hope that it will remain the same as the previous fiscal year.

### **Item 7: Marimo Moss Ball-Zebra Mussel Incident**

**Eric Anderson**, Aquatic Invasive Species Enforcement Captain of WDFW, provided a briefing on the emergency action taken in light of zebra mussels being detected in aquatic moss balls.

While not all moss balls are imported from Ukraine, where zebra mussels are native, the Betta Buddy brand is. Two large pet store companies that sell this brand of moss balls include PetSmart and Petco.

The discovery of the mussels is problematic, however, Captain Anderson highlighted that this issue has opened communication between the pet industry and state agencies who deal with invasive species.

Following the discovery of the mussels at a Washington Petco on March 2, 2021, the incident command system light was initiated the following day. The team included **Captain Eric Anderson, Allen Pleus, Jesse Schultz, Becky Bennett, Justin Bush, Mark Taylor, and Alexis Haifley.**

In the following weeks, there was communication and collaboration between California Fish and Game, Petco Corporate, PetSmart, WDFW, WISC, United States Fish and Wildlife, Columbia River Basin Team Multiagency Coordination Group, and many more

to eliminate the threat. In part, eliminating the threat included having PetSmart and Petco stop incoming product from coming, removing, and properly disposing of the product that was in stores, and educating the public on how to properly dispose of any moss balls that they may have.

Following the report, Taylor highlighted WDFW and WISC for their great job in communicating. Member Pleus thanked Captain Anderson for his contribution and also noted that 32 states and 5 Canadian provinces have detected the Marimo moss balls.

**Member Seebacher** ask for clarification on how pet shops are engaging with their customer base, to which Captain Anderson explained that pet shops are using their reward systems as means of contact, posting in their stores, and putting alerts on their websites.

#### **Item 8: Lunch- 12:08 p.m. -12:40 p.m.**

#### **Item 9: U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine Update**

**Member Campbell**, USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine, provided an update concerning plant protection and quarantine.

Member Campbell began by reading the department's mission statement, which states that APHIS-PPQ safeguards agriculture and natural resources from the entry, establishment, and spread of animal and plant pests and noxious weeds into the United States of America; and supports trade and exports of U.S. agricultural products.

Within Washington, Member Campbell noted that there are APHIS facilities at eight different locations dedicated to collaboration with US Customs and Border Protection and other cooperators, biocontrol, hay, cherry, and grasshopper programs, pest detection, garbage regulation, agricultural quarantine inspection, and smuggling interdiction and trade compliance.

Apart from agricultural quarantine inspection, Member Campbell mentioned that APHIS safeguards agriculture from plant pests and disease including gypsy moths, grasshoppers, Mormon crickets, the Emerald Ash Borer, the potato cyst nematode, and sudden oak death.

In closing, Member Campbell discussed the trade, permitting, and anti-smuggling safeguarding that APHIS carries out.

When opened to discussion, **Bush** noted that there was a recent Washington State Department of Agriculture news release alerting residents to Japanese beetle.

### **Item 10: 2020 Watercraft Inspections and 2021 Forecast**

**Captain Anderson** provided information on the watercraft AIS boat inspection program.

In 2020, there were two inspection stations, one in Spokane that is open fulltime and one in Pasco that is open anywhere from 4-7 days a week. Captain Anderson explained that between the two stations, they were open 645 days last year with 32,735 boat inspection completed. From those inspections, 25 vessels had evidence of zebra mussels.

At the Spokane location, a decontamination station has been permanently installed thanks to funding from the RCO. The funding also provided the 2020 operation budget for watercraft inspections.

At the Pasco location, a new office was built using funding from the Bureau of Reclamation.

For 2021, Captain Anderson noted that a third check station will be opened in Cle Elum using funding from the Bureau of Reclamation. As it stands, this will be a two-year pilot project that checks aquatic vessels heading Eastbound on I-90. Operations will run from March to October.

Addressing 2022's funding, Captain Anderson noted that the operations crew is secure. In the upcoming budget, WDFW may be funded \$2.8 million for the next biennium and this would permanently fund the watercraft inspection program.

Following the update, **Chair Maroney** asked if the Cle Elum location would inspect vessels coming both East and West bound. Captain Anderson explained that only Eastbound vessels would be examined. Chair Maroney also inquired about signage for vessel inspection, to which Captain Anderson explained that sign posts from the old weigh station have been utilized.

### **Item 11: Northern Pike Region Forum Debrief and Outcomes**

**Chair Maroney**, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, provided a debrief on the Northern Pike Regional Forum.

This forum was presented by the Upper Columbia United Tribes on February 17, 2021 and had 113 participants statewide and from Canada. Chair Maroney explained that the

forum's purpose was to draw attention to how Northern Pike threatens the Columbia river basin ecosystem, to share relevant information, and to discuss the policy level challenges being faced.

Chair Maroney highlighted that the forum was highly interactive as it gave participants the chance to discuss answers to several questions. For example, one question was:

In your view, what is most important?

- Policy leadership and coordination
- Technical innovation and information sharing
- Education and outreach
- Policy and technical
- Technical and education
- All of the above

There was also an opportunity for meeting participants to participate in a policy, technical and education, or communication workgroup. Chair Maroney noted that follow-up with the workgroups would continue as part of the work.

As a result of the forum, a [72-page report](#) was produced.

## **Item 12: European Green Crab Stakeholder Meeting Debriefing**

**Chelsey Buffington**, WDFW Aquatic Invasive Species-European Green Crab (EGC) Lead, provided an update on EGC, which are prohibited level one species.

Buffington provided a brief timeline of EGC management within Washington, that started with the detection of the species in 1998 near Willapa Bay and Gray Harbor and brought us up to present day, where there is a funding request awaiting approval and allocation. This funding would assist with monitoring and removal efforts being deployed in Drayton Harbor, the Outer Coast, and the Salish Sea.

Moving forward, Buffington addressed the EGC statewide stakeholder meeting, which was held in February of 2021 and can be found on [WDFW's YouTube page](#). The intention of the meeting was to get everyone on the same page in terms of management, specifically the two areas that are managed differently. Those areas are the inland Salish sea and the outer coast.

This meeting had 130 participants resulting from the 250 EGC contacts. There were two sessions. The first session presented management structures, capacity building, and a status update, while the second session addressed management coordination.

In summarizing the meeting, Buffington clarified that WDFW takes the lead on overseeing planning coordination, the implementation management actions, and they provide consultation and assistance to its comanagers, who include tribes and federal agencies. The Washington Sea Grant, a group of citizen scientists, also assist in EGC detection.

Buffington explained that EGC efforts follow an adaptive management-based approach, yet they are continuing to learn and improve this strategy. This is important because EGC has increased in abundance and expanded within the coastal and inland shorelines. Buffington did note that because of differing water patterns, crab movement, and crab abundance, the two shorelines have different statuses and management strategies.

Closing Buffington expressed that while the goal is to eliminate EGC, complete eradication is not possible. This is where several different management strategies come in. These include suppression, containment, and prevention.

When opened to discussion and questions, **Member Pleus** relayed his thanks and appreciation for all of those who are involved in the suppression and eradication of EGC.

**Member Hass** asked about the control efforts in Canada. Buffington noted that trapping in Canada has been difficult in light of COVID-19 restrictions and the fact that most trapping is done by boat rather than land.

### **Item 13: Break 1:50 p.m.-2:00 p.m.**

### **Item 14: Asian Giant Hornet in British Columbia**

**Paul van Westendorp**, Provincial Apiculturist in British Columbia, provided a briefing on the Asian Giant Hornets (AGH).

Opening, he noted that this apex predator belongs to the genus *Vespa*, which includes 25 other species. AGH happen to be the largest, at 5 centimeters long.

In Canada, the first discovery of the AGH was through a beekeeper in Nanaimo in September of 2019. Luckily, workers were able to locate and eradicate the nest from a local park using CO<sub>2</sub> and alcohol. This nest had over 200 workers and one queen.

After providing the annual life cycle of the species, he explained that more specimens had been located in Blaine, Washington and White Rock, British Columbia. Each of these specimens were determined to come from differing origins.

To locate more specimens within Canada, traps were set up in the Fraser Valley. Unfortunately, none were found in the traps, but six more specimens were identified by members of the public within 12 months.

Westendorp highlighted the AGH's ability to harm or kill honeybees, humans, livestock, and pets, making it a worrisome nonnative species. Canada intends to continue surveillance and eradication methods throughout 2021.

Before opening the floor to discussion, Westendorp brought awareness to two other species of hornets that have been introduced to the US. These are *Vespa soror*, which was introduced in May 2019, and *Vespa velutina*, which was introduced in 2004.

Because people have difficulty distinguishing the difference between hornets and bees, Westendorp explained that one key characteristic that bees have is tiny "hairs", while hornets are typically bald.

**Member Burke** inquired whether the current level of effort toward managing AGH in Canada is effective. Westendorp noted that because it is more likely that AGH will end up migrating south through Washington, Canada's current efforts should suffice.

Addressing USDA, **Member Cook-Tabor** asked if this was a prohibited species and if it was being inspected for at ports. **Member Cunningham** said they are looking at commodities. Westendorp explained that it is possible for this species to be unintentionally imported.

### **Item 15: Future Meeting Planning Roundtable Discussion**

**Chair Maroney** requested future meeting topics. They included:

- An update on the Marimo moss ball response
- A budget and legislative update from state agencies
- European chafer update
- Briefing on Japanese beetle by WSDA
- Information from Oregon on the Japanese beetle topic
- Strategic Management for Invasive species
- WSDOT assessments for natural and maintenance areas
- Introduction of new RCO director
- A tool of management for state parks- ecology assessments by NatureServe

Closing, the chair noted that the next meeting will also be held virtually.

*General Public Comment: No verbal comment was given at this time.*

**Adjourn 3:01 p.m.**

Chair Maroney closed the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

Next regular meeting will be June 10, 2021 in the Natural Resources Building at 1111 Washington St SE, Olympia, WA 98501- Subject to change considering COVID-19